

Staying in Touch

April 2008

Message from the Director

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**Still time to Sign Up to
Participate in the Dixon
Adult Community
Service Reviews!**
Contact Anne Sturtz at
anne.sturtz@dc.gov.



Dear DMH Employee,

I am pleased to report that Mayor Fenty continued his support for the Department in his FY 09 Budget submitted to the Council despite the slowed government growth. In addition to maintaining the current level of support for our core

functions, the Mayor included funds for significant program enhancements.

With the additional support, we will be able to:

- Expand acute care services to help reduce dependency of Saint Elizabeths Hospital for acute care services for involuntary civil patients;
- Fund negotiated union pay increases;
- Respond to individuals experiencing a psychiatric crisis with new positions for our new mobile crisis teams;
- Continue housing support for nearly 700 consumers with stabilized funding, and
- Support reforms at Saint Elizabeth Hospital to improve environmental, health and safety activities at the hospital.

Though 80 vacant positions were eliminated as part of a government wide initiative to achieve savings, we are confident that we will be able to restructure to prevent a negative impact on services. Also, the major reason our budget shows a reduction 6.7% is because we transferred funds to the Medicaid Administration Agency for provider payments.

The Council Committee on Health will hold a public hearing on April 17 to review our budget request.

As always, I welcome hearing from you about your suggestions about ways to make the Department better at steve.baron@dc.gov.

Steve

FilmFest 08 Cinema for Seniors Draws DMH Participation

For more than 20 years, **Sandy Hassan**, Community Residence Facility Licensing Inspector in the Office of Accountability, has made sure that patients from Saint Elizabeths and other DMH consumers are able to enjoy the annual Filmfest Cinema for Seniors, sponsored by the DC International Film Festival.

This year's film is "GREAT AMERICAN ENTERTAINERS", an award winning film featuring vintage performances by Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughn, Nat King Cole, Billy Holiday, Cab Calloway and show stopping dance routines by the Lindy Hoppers and Nicholas Brothers. It will be shown on Tuesday, April 29, at 10:00 a.m. at the Avalon Theater.

For the many years, screenings were at the AFI Theater in the Kennedy Center. "It gave me great joy to see our consumers dressed up, proud, and displaying confident ownership of their right not to be regarded as the other," recalled Sandy.

Sandy credits **Leslie Deveau** also a Licensing Inspector for Community Residence Facilities with active support for the program.

Congratulations!

If you ever had to process a requisition or a purchase order, you likely relied on **Sue Crestwell** to guide you. Sue was promoted recently to contract specialist in the Office of Contracting and Procurement.

Sue started her career as a clerk typist/timekeeper at Saint Elizabeths in January 1980 and held various staff positions until she was promoted to staff assistant in the Office of Contracts and Procurement in 2006.

And, **Susan Johnson** received the prestigious Social Worker of the Year Award from the National Association of Social Workers at a recent annual conference. **Susan** works with the School Mental Health Program at the Lasalle Elementary School. She received her Master of Social Work from Howard University and worked at the DC Department of Human Services before coming to DMH.

Congratulations **Sue** and **Susan**!

**Council Committee on
Health Public Hearing
on DMH FY 09 Budget
Request on April 17,
2008, at 10:00 a.m.**

Employee Spotlight: Rhonda White

When DC CSA kicked off SURE (a Same Day Service program), it made sure the right person was in place to get the job done.

Rhonda White is the Patient Account Service Representative at the 35 K Street office and is responsible for the SURE Intake process.

Rhonda White came to DMH in July 2003 after working for more than 21 years in the auditing department of the National League of Postmasters. She responds to all walk in requests for services, does the initial interview, and makes referrals to the proper place. She also is responsible for handling all new admissions—including from the jail, hospitals or Access Helpline—and, she handles all telephone inquiries about available services.

Rhonda started in the billing office of the DC CSA but was detailed to the front desk because of her ability to communicate and to juggle different tasks. She says her job is very stressful, but, she likes people and dealing with the public.

The mother of a 21 year old son attending the University of the District of Columbia, **Rhonda** says she has a boring life that revolves around her job. She is at her desk by 7:45 a.m. and doesn't leave until 8:00 p.m., most evenings—with no comp time or overtime pay. She takes pride in her work and does whatever it takes to get the job done.

Originally from Mobile, Alabama, she came to the District in 1976. She has been nominated twice for DMH Employee of the Year.



News from Human Resources

Announcement of Voluntary Early Out Retirement. The deadline for submitting an application to retire under the Retirement Incentive Program has passed. However, the DCHR has announced a new Voluntary Early Retirement Program. Under this program, you may be eligible to retire at an earlier age with the proper years of service. To participate, you must meet one of the following minimum age and service requirements:

1. 50 years of age and 20 years of credible service, or
2. Any Age and 25 years of creditable service.

Please be aware that if you are under age 55, your annuity rate will be reduced according to a set formula.

Applications will be accepted from February 25 through December 31, 2008. For more information or an application, you can contact the Office of Human Resources on (202) 673.4411. Employees at Saint Elizabeths should contact its HR division on 645.6917.

65 years of Dance Movement Therapy Celebrated at Saint Elizabeths

The sound of music filled the Chapel on March 20 as Saint Elizabeths celebrated 65 years of dance movement therapy with national leaders in the dance therapy movement and dancers from the University of the District of Columbia. Karen Bradley led a movement choir. Congratulations to **Tracie Robinson** for a wonderful program.

Co sponsored with the American Dance Therapy Association, the event included talks by former students of Marion Chace, the seminal figure in the field of Dance Therapy who worked at Saint Elizabeths.

"We celebrate not just dance therapy's 65 years, but also recognize the forward creative healing vision of Saint Elizabeths in supporting the development of this healing modality which has helped so many people," said **Dr. Patrick Canavan**, Chief Executive Officer of the Hospital.

Marion Chace, a former concert dancer with the well known Denishawn Troupe, began work at the Hospital as a Red Cross Volunteer in 1943. Ms. Chace was remarkable in her ability to communicate through rhythmic interaction with regressed and non-verbal people who responded by expressing a range of emotions through dance and movement.

As the program at Saint Elizabeths grew, it paralleled the development of the dance therapy profession and recognition of its established standards for training, practice and credentialing. Dance therapists trained and employed at Saint Elizabeths are influential leaders in the profession. More than 70 dance therapists have been trained at the Hospital.

In Memoriam **Martha J. Brown-Murray**

Martha J. Brown-Murray worked as a registered nurse for more than 32 years with DMH—at Saint Elizabeths Hospital and with the DC CSA multicultural services program. She received the District of Columbia Nurses Association Practice Award in 2007 in recognition of her dedicated commitment to patient care and outstanding contributions to the nursing profession. She was President of the DCNA-DMH local unit and was on the DMH Labor Management Partnership Council and various other labor management committees. She coordinated annual events celebrating nursing week and was instrumental in the creation of employee award celebrations at the Department. Her contributions will be missed.



Upcoming Events

Please let me know about your upcoming event at phyllis.jones@dc.gov

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| Dixon Court Monitor Visits | April 3-4; 9-10 and 23-24 |
| Emancipation Day Holiday | April 16 |
| CSR Adult New Reviewer Training | April 23-24 |
| DC CSA & Community Advisory Council 5 th Annual DC CSA Participants Banquet and Awards Ceremony | May 29 |